

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheet makes changes to Figs. 6(a) and 6(b) and replaces the original sheet with Figs. 6(a) and 6(b).

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification, the drawings and claims 1, 3, 4 and 9-17 are amended. Claims 18-20 are added. No new matter is added by these amendments. Claims 13-15 are provisionally withdrawn from consideration as drawn to a non-elected group of claims by the Examiner. Reconsideration of the application based upon the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representatives by Examiner Leung in the February 6, 2007 telephone interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

The specification is amended to disclose, and claim 9 is amended to recite, an "oxidation catalyst" instead of an "oxide catalyst." The term "oxide catalyst" was inadvertently used in the translation of the foreign priority document. Because this is clearly a translational error, this amendment does not introduce new matter. It is clear from paragraph [0030] that "oxidation catalyst" is the intended term.

The Office Action objects to Figs. 6(a) and 6(b) because they allegedly disclose conventional art. Figs. 6(a) and 6(b) are amended to include the legend "Related Art" with the inclusion of the attached replacement drawing sheet to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Claim 12 is objected to for an informality. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that claim 12 should recite lithium aluminum silicate (LAS) instead of "LAS." Claim 12 is amended as suggested in the Office Action.

Claim 17 is objected to for informalities. Claim 17 is amended to obviate the objection.

Accordingly, withdrawal of the objections to claims 12 and 17 for informalities are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 8 and 10-12 are rejected on the grounds of non-statutory obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1-13 of U.S. Patent No. 7,128,961 to Kai et al. (Kai). The enclosure of a Terminal Disclaimer under 37 C.F.R. §1.321(c), obviates this rejection.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the double patenting rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 4, 10, 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, claims 3 and 4 are rejected because it is allegedly unclear which end points define the claimed range of the length of a slit.

Claim 3 is amended to recite a "width of each slit is in a range of from 0.2 to 1 mm and a length of each slit is from 1 mm to a length which is the shorter of (a) 30 mm and (b) 1/2 of a length of the honeycomb structure."

Claim 4 is amended to recite a "width of each slit is in a range of from 0.4 to 0.8 mm, and a length of each slit is from 2 mm to a length which is the shorter of (a) 15 mm and (b) 1/4 of a length of the honeycomb structure."

Claims 10 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, because the phrase "such as" allegedly renders parts of the claim indefinite. The features following the phrase "such as" have been canceled from claims 10 and 16 and are reintroduced in new dependent claims 18-20. During the February 6, 2006 telephone interview, Examiner Leung asserted that claims 18 and 19 could not be given patentable weight because they allegedly recite an intended use. As suggested by the Examiner, claims 18 and 19 are amended to recite the combustion engine is in communication with the honeycomb structure. The

Examiner, during the telephone interview, also acknowledged that the rejection of claims 10 and 16 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, would be withdrawn.

The Office Action does not set forth why claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants assume that claim 17 was mistakenly included in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3, 4, 10, 16 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 10-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,464,185 to Tomita et al. (Tomita). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 recites "through channels separated by porous partition walls," and further recites "at least one slit per through channel." At least these features are not taught in Tomita. Tomita teaches minute pores 31 and exhaust gas blowing pores 32. However, Tomita does not disclose "at least one slit per through channel," as recited in claim 1.

To better clarify the "slit" feature, claim 1 is amended to recite "each slit having a width-to-length ratio of at least 1:2." This feature is supported by Applicant's disclosure, preferred dimensions, discussed in at least paragraph [0024]. The Examiner stated in the telephone interview that the application will be further reviewed in light of the amendments.

For at least the above reasons, Tomita cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combinations of all of the features recited in at least independent claim 1. Further, claims 2, 8 and 10-12 would also not have been suggested by the applied prior art references for at least the respective dependence of these claims on allowable independent claim 1, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 2, 8 and 10-12 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,464,185 to Tomita are respectfully requested.

Claims 3-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Tomita in view of European Patent Publication No. EP 1 128 031 to Hidaka et al. (Hidaka). Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Tomita in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,758,496 to Rao et al. (Rao). Claims 16 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,853,459 to Kuwamoto et al. (Kuwamoto) in view of Tomita. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

For the reasons set forth above, Tomita fails to disclose the combinations of the features as positively recited in claim 1. The Office Action cites Hidaka, Rao and Kuwamoto for allegedly disclosing individual additional features of claims 3-7, 9, 16 and 17. However, Hidaka, Rao and Kuwamoto fail to cure the deficiencies of Tomita with respect to claim 1.

For at least the above reasons, Tomita cannot reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the combinations of all of the features recited in at least independent claims 1 and 16. Further, claims 3-7, 9 and 17 would also not have been suggested by the applied prior art references for at least the respective dependence of these claims on allowable independent claims 1 and 16, as well as for the separately patentable subject matter that each of these claims recites.

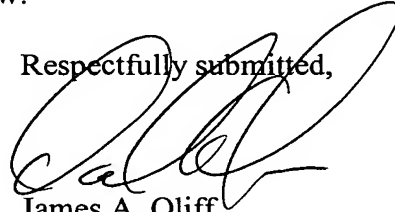
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 3-7, 9, 16 and 17 under some combination of the applied prior art references, as enumerated above, are respectfully requested.

Claims 13-15, drawn to a method for manufacturing a honeycomb structure, contain all the features of the product claims. Accordingly, rejoinder of the method claims upon allowance of the product claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:DAT/jfb

Attachments:

Replacement Drawing Sheet (Figs. 6(a) and 6(b))
Terminal Disclaimer

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